There was once a rat who lived in a grand house.

The house was warm.

The pantry was full.

The floors were polished wood.

The owner of the house was generous, though unseen.

The other rats scurried about in

crumbs and corners,

fighting for scraps.

But this rat was different.

He was intelligent.

He studied the walls.

He studied the locks.

He studied the patterns of footsteps.

He learned when the lights turned on.

How the doors opened.

How the food was stored.

Soon he was no longer stealing crumbs.

He built tiny tools from wire and thread.

He crafted pulleys from twine.

He redirected grain with tunnels.

He disabled traps with

counterweights.

The other rats stared in awe.

“Visionary” they said.

“Savior”

And the intelligent rat smiled.

He said,

“Why live on scraps

when we can take the entire

pantry?”

He built greater inventions.

He redirected entire shelves.

He engineered systems to move food

without being seen.

Soon the rats no longer feared hunger.

They praised the intelligent rat.

But the intelligent rat never once asked:

Who built the house?

Who filled the pantry?

Who planted the grain?

He only calculated.

He only optimized.

He only extracted.

One night, while adjusting a mechanism

he paused.

For the first time, he heard something.

Footsteps

Not locks.

Not Lights

But silent footsteps

Giant

The house was still.

and

behold

The owner catches him like a giant

to a beast

The Rat knew the house.

Yet never understood the owner

He could exploit it.

But never created it.

A master of consumption.

caught like a deer in head lights

And suddenly, all his brilliance

felt small.